

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A tissue sampling apparatus, comprising:
a body having a primary lumen for receiving a tissue sample, and having a distal end, a proximal end, and a longitudinal axis extending from said proximal end to said distal end;
a cutter having a distal cutting edge and being movable both distally and proximally relative to said body; and
a band having an opening disposed therein and extending across a distal end of said tissue sampling apparatus, said opening being movable relative to said distal cutting edge in order to sever a distal end of said tissue sample.
2. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 1, wherein said body comprises an outer sheath, and said cutter is disposed within said outer sheath.
3. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 2, wherein said cutter is selectively rotatable.
4. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 2, and further comprising an actuator disposed proximally of said body.
5. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 4, wherein said actuator comprises a trigger for axially retracting and extending said cutter.
6. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 5, wherein said trigger also moves said band in order to move said opening relative to said distal cutting edge.

7. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 3, wherein said actuator comprises a trigger for selectively rotating said cutting cylinder.

8. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 4, wherein said actuator comprises a cam nut for axially retracting and extending said cutting cylinder.

9. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 8, wherein said cam nut also moves said band in order to move said eyelet relative to said distal cutting edge.

10. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 1, wherein said tubular body lumen is sized to accommodate a plurality of tissue samples.

11. A tissue sampling apparatus, comprising:

a tubular body having a primary lumen for receiving a tissue sample, and having a distal end, a proximal end, and a longitudinal axis extending from said proximal end to said distal end; and

5 a severing element having an eyelet disposed therein and extending across a distal end of said tissue sampling apparatus, said eyelet being movable relative to said tubular body in order to sever a distal end of said tissue sample.

12. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 11, and further comprising an actuator disposed proximally of said tubular body.

13. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 12, wherein said actuator is adapted to move said band in order to move said eyelet relative to said tubular body.

14. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 13, wherein said actuator comprises a trigger.

15. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 13, wherein said actuator comprises a cam nut.

16. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 11, and further comprising a cutter having a distal cutting edge and being movable both distally and proximally relative to said body.

17. The tissue sampling apparatus as recited in Claim 11, and further comprising a probe fitting having an aperture which communicates with said primary lumen, said probe fitting being configured to receive a sensing probe for locating a lesion in a patient's body.

18. A method of capturing a body tissue sample using a tissue sampling apparatus comprising a body having a lumen extending therethrough and a distal end, a cutting element disposed at the distal end of the body, an opening disposed at the distal end of the body for transverse movement across said distal end, and an actuator for moving the opening, the method comprising:

advancing the body through a tissue portion a desired distance so that the cutting element cuts a tissue sample core as the tissue sample enters the lumen; and

actuating the opening to move across the distal end of the body to sever a distal end of the tissue sample core.

19. The method as recited in Claim 18, wherein said tissue sampling apparatus includes a sensing probe disposed therein, the method further comprising a step of actuating said sensing probe to identify and locate a target lesion prior to advancing said body.